

## Social Factors that necessitate Language Variation and Varieties

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### Abstract

This research aims to shed light on the meaning of language variety which is regarded as a variation over time in a language's features. It is studied in several subfields of linguistics: historical linguistics, sociolinguistics, and evolutionary linguistics. Language change is a common phenomenon among communities. All languages are bound to change, and such change may be attributed to factors such as economy, contact and cultural environment. This research examines the various types of language variation which are phonological, lexical , semantic and syntactic changes that take place in Arabic words. The relationship between Arabic and English, two languages which belong to two different language families, has been the subject of study for a long period of time. The main objective of this study is to examine the various types of language change which are; phonological, lexical, semantic and syntactic change involved in the process of Arabic words.

**Keywords:** Social Factors , Language , Varieties

### العوامل الاجتماعية التي تستلزم تنوع اللغة وتنوعها

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### خلاصة

يهدف هذا البحث إلى تسليط الضوء على معنى التنوع اللغوي الذي يعتبر بمثابة تباين مع مرور الوقت في سمات اللغة. تتم دراسته في عدة مجالات فرعية من اللغويات: اللغويات التاريخية، وعلم اللغة الاجتماعي، واللسانيات التطورية. يعد تغيير اللغة ظاهرة شائعة بين المجتمعات. جميع اللغات لا بد أن تتغير، ويمكن أن يعزى هذا التغيير إلى عوامل مثل الاقتصاد والاتصال والبيئة الثقافية. يتناول هذا البحث الأنواع المختلفة من الاختلافات اللغوية وهي التغيرات الصوتية والمعجمية والدلالية والنحوية التي تحدث في الكلمات العربية. كانت العلاقة بين اللغة العربية والإنجليزية، وهما لغتان تنتميان إلى عائلتين لغويتين مختلفتين، موضوع دراسة لفترة طويلة من الزمن. الهدف الرئيسي من هذه الدراسة هو دراسة الأنواع المختلفة لتغيير اللغة وهي: التغيير الصوتي والمعجمي والدلالي والنحوي الذي يدخل في عملية الكلمات العربية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: العوامل الاجتماعية، اللغة، الأصناف

## Chapter One: Introduction

### 1.1 Statement of the Problem

Variation is a characteristic of language, there is more than one way of saying the same thing. Speakers may vary pronunciation (accent), word choice (lexicon), or morphology and syntax (sometimes called "grammar"). Language

variation is a core concept in sociolinguistics, to the extent that it requires reference to social factors. Language varies from one place to another, from one social group to another, and from one situation to another. It is a universal characteristic of human language that speakers of the same language who live in different parts of a continuous territory do not speak in the same way, and the speech of each locality differs in some features from the speech of each neighboring locality.

Social factors affect language behaviors. The primary social factors that people consider are **political, gender, social, society, interaction and technology** factors. The choice of these social factors to investigate comes from previous work at the speech community level on the sociolinguistics of language shift and endangerment. Specific social factors that can affect second language acquisition include age, gender, social class, and ethnic identity. Situational factors are those which vary between each social interaction. Specific social factors that can affect second language acquisition include age, gender, social class, and ethnic identity. Situational factors are those which vary between each social interaction.

And the thing that social forces contribute to linguistic change is also clear. Younger people alter their speech so as to differentiate themselves from their elders. Islanders want to sound different from mainlanders. Middle-class speakers attempt to sound different from the working class, and vice versa. Men and women tend to speak the way that their sex is "supposed to" speak. In the end, sometimes consciously and sometimes unconsciously, people speak like the people they want to think of themselves as being. Linguistic differentiation is a matter of the presentation of self in everyday life. The research raises to answer the following questions:

1. What does it mean by language variation?
2. What is the difference between language change and language variation?
3. What are the types of language variation?
4. What are the social factors that affect the variation of language?

## 1.2 The Hypothesis

This research hypothesizes that a variation is a characteristic of language, another hypothesis that there is more than one way of saying the same thing in language but speakers may vary pronunciation, word choice, or morphology and syntax. The third hypothesis is that there are five types of language variations: **phonetic and phonological** variation, **lexical, semantic, spelling, syntax** variations. The final hypothesis is that there are five social factors; **political,**

**gender, social, society, interaction and technology** factors. These factors change or vary the language and shift her from one situation to another.

### 1.3 The Aims

The research aims to

1. providing the meaning of language varieties, social factors.
2. showing the types of language variation in linguistics.
3. explaining with example the social factors that affect language variations in society.
4. discussing the most important social factors that change or shift language from one situation to another.

### 1.4 The Limits

In this study, the researcher will study the social factors that necessitate the language variation in the English language.

### 1.5 The Value

This research is interesting for most people that do not know what are the social factors that vary their language, so after finishing the reading and understanding the research, they will use their language in an accurate way without any mistakes.

## Chapter Two: Theoretical Background

### 2.1 Definition of Language Variation

Language variation is variation over time in a language's features. It is studied in several subfields of linguistics, historical linguistics, sociolinguistics, and evolutionary linguistics. Traditional theories of historical linguistics identify three main types of change: systematic change in the pronunciation of phonemes, or sound change, borrowing, in which features of a language or dialect are altered as a result of influence from another language or dialect and analogical change, in which the shape or grammatical behavior of a word is altered to more closely resemble that of another word (AlBader, 2015: 158).

Lewis (1999: 46) defines language variation as it is regarded as a variation over time in a language's features. It is studied in several subfields of linguistics: historical linguistics, sociolinguistics, and evolutionary linguistics.

All living languages are continually undergoing change. Some commentators use derogatory labels such as "corruption" to suggest that language change constitutes a degradation in the quality of a language, especially when the change originates from human error or is a prescriptively discouraged usage. Modern linguistics rejects this concept, since from a scientific point of view such innovations cannot be judged in terms of good or bad. John Lyons notes that "any standard of evaluation applied to language variations must be based upon a recognition of the various functions a language 'is called upon' to fulfill in the society which uses it (ibid: 47).

## 2.2 Types of Language Variation

Language change refers to altering the features of a language over time. These changes are often gradual and usually permanent. However, this is not always the case. The rate at which changes occur depends on the different values of people who use certain languages. For example, if speakers of a specific language prefer the steadiness and tradition of their language, the changes will be more gradual. However, if they are more willing to embrace originality and unfamiliarity, the changes will be faster. An example of language change is the creation of new words and the discarding of old ones (Hale, 2007: 109).

### 2.2.1 Phonetic and phonological Variation

Sound change as change in the pronunciation of phonemes can lead to phonological change (such as a change in the relationships between phonemes within the structure of a language). For instance, if the pronunciation of one phoneme changes to become identical to that of another phoneme, the two original phonemes can merge into a single phoneme, reducing the total number of phonemes the language contains (John, 2017: 430).

Determining the exact course of sound change in historical languages can pose difficulties, inasmuch as the technology of sound recording dates only from the 19th century, and thus sound changes before that time must be inferred from written texts. The orthographical practices of historical writers provide the main (indirect) evidence of how language sounds have changed over the centuries. Poetic devices such as rhyme and rhythm can also provide clues to earlier phonetic and phonological patterns (ibid: 431).

A principal axiom of historical linguistics, established by the linguists of the Neogrammarian school of thought in the 19th century, is that sound change is said to be "regular" as a given sound change simultaneously affects all words in which the relevant set of phonemes appears, rather than each word's pronunciation changing independently of each other (Wardhaugh, 1986: 251).

The focus in this change is on how sound change takes place, rather than a useful approximation, is controversial but it has proven extremely valuable to historical linguistics as a heuristic and enabled the development of methodologies of comparative reconstruction and internal reconstruction that allow linguists to extrapolate backward from known languages to the properties of earlier, unattested languages and hypothesize sound changes that may have taken place in them (Labov, 2001: 16).

### 2.2.2 Lexical Variation

Hale (2007: 158) mentions that the study of lexical changes forms the diachronic portion of the science of onomasiology. The ongoing influx of new words into the English language (for example) helps make it a rich field for investigation into language change, despite the difficulty of defining precisely and accurately the vocabulary available to speakers of English. Throughout its history English has not only borrowed words from other languages but has recombined and recycled them to create new meanings, whilst losing some old words.

Dictionary writers try to keep track of the changes in languages by recording (and, ideally, dating) the appearance in a language of new words, or of new usages for existing words. By the same token, they may tag some words eventually as "archaic" or "obsolete" (ibid: 159).

### 2.2.3 Spelling Variation

Standardization of spelling originated centuries ago.[vague][citation needed] Differences in spelling often catch the eye of a reader of a text from a previous century. The pre-print era had fewer literate people: languages lacked fixed systems of orthography, and the handwritten manuscripts that survive often show words spelled according to regional pronunciation and to personal preference (Altintas, 2007: 39-40).

### 2.2.4 Semantic Variation

Semantic changes are shifts in the meanings of existing words. Basic types of semantic change include:

1. pejoration, in which a term's connotations become more negative
2. amelioration, in which a term's connotations become more positive

3. broadening, in which a term acquires additional potential uses
4. narrowing, in which a term's potential uses are restricted (Coates, 1993: 85).

After a word enters a language, its meaning can change as through a shift in the valence of its connotations. As an example, when "*villain*" entered English it meant '*peasant*' or '*farmhand*', but acquired the connotation '*low-born*' or '*scoundrel*', and today only the negative use survives. Thus 'villain' has undergone pejoration. Conversely, the word "*wicked*" is undergoing amelioration in colloquial contexts, shifting from its original sense of '*evil*', to the much more positive one as of 2009 of '*brilliant*' (ibid: 86-87).

Words' meanings may also change in terms of the breadth of their semantic domain. Narrowing a word limits its alternative meanings, whereas broadening associates new meanings with it. For example, "*hound*" (Old English ) once referred to any dog, whereas in modern English it denotes only a particular type of dog. On the other hand, the word "*dog*" itself has been broadened from its Old English root '*dogge*', the name of a particular breed, to become the general term for all domestic canines (Patton, 2010: 90).

### 2.2.5 Syntactic Variation

AlBader (2015: 381) mentions that syntactic change is the evolution of the syntactic structure of a natural language. Over time, syntactic change is the greatest modifier of a particular language. Massive changes-attributable either to creolization or to relexification – may occur both in syntax and in vocabulary. Syntactic change can also be purely language-internal, whether independent within the syntactic component or the eventual result of phonological or morphological change.

## 2.3 Causes of Language Variation

**2.3.1 Economy:** Speech communities tend to change their utterances to be as efficient and effective (with as little effort) as possible, while still reaching communicative goals. Purposeful speaking therefore involves a trade-off of costs and benefits (Labov, 2001: 164).

The principle of least effort tends to result in phonetic reduction of speech forms. After some time a change may become widely accepted (it becomes a regular sound change) and may end up treated as standard. For instance: going to [ˈɡoʊ.ɪŋ.tʊ] → gonna [ˈɡɒnə] or [ˈɡʌnə], with examples of both vowel reduction [ʊ] → [ə] and elision [nt] → [n], [oʊ.ɪ] → [ʌ] (ibid: 165).

**2.3.2 Expressiveness:** Common or overused language tends to lose its

emotional or rhetorical intensity over time; therefore, new words and constructions are continuously employed to revive that intensity (ibid: 166).

**2.3.3 Analogy:** Over time, speech communities unconsciously apply patterns of rules in certain words, sounds, etc. to unrelated other words, sounds, etc.

**2.3.4 Language contact:** Words and constructions are borrowed from one language into another (Wardhaugh, 1986: 69).

**2.3.5 Cultural environment:** As a culture evolves, new places, situations, and objects inevitably enter its language, whether or not the culture encounters different people (ibid: 170).

**2.3.6 Migration/ Movement:** Speech communities, moving into a region with a new or more complex linguistic situation, will influence and be influenced by language change, they sometimes even end up with entirely new languages, such as pidgins and creoles (ibid: 171).

## 2.4 Types of Social Factors of Language Variation

### 2.4.1 Political Factors

Politics affect society as a whole, but educators can take a different tack in the classroom. As a teacher, he or she can become more understanding of English language learners in order to aid in the improvement of their language abilities. When people are eager to "get on" in a society where speaking the second language is necessary for success, there is a quick transition that takes place. Language change frequently has political roots, such as invasion and migration of people. Those who relocate to another nation and pick up a new language do so inadequately. They subsequently impart these little flaws to their offspring and those in their social group, eventually changing the language (Payne, 1980: 126).

In addition to the linguistic changes caused by immigration, politics also affects language change in more direct ways through public discussions. For instance, increasing environmental awareness and environmental policies in recent decades has led to a number of new words and phrases such as "tree-hugger", "eco-friendly", "carbon footprint", "greenwashing", "locavore", "eco-terrorism" and "green collar jobs" (Phillipson, 1992: 50).

### 2.4.2 Society Factor

Social changes are typically brought about by changes in politics, economy, and technology. Language changes as a result of social developments. In other

words, language change has specific impacts on society. In practically every community, certain people enjoy social status, financial security, and financial power while others have less of these things. Common factors include occupation, educational attainment, income, and type of residence, with ordered levels for each. Individuals with varying social status levels respond to situations differently, view things differently, and use various words and phrases. **For example**, poor people who cannot afford an education or people who grew up in a rural setting where appropriate grammar wasn't encouraged would not talk as elegantly as someone of greater status (Paolillo, 2001:60).

Simply because no two people talk the same, there are differences based on a speaker's age, gender, and ethnicity even within the same small town. People learn new words and incorporate them into new speech patterns as a result of encounters. There is a chance that the words and phrases we use now may never be the same as those our parents or grandparents used (Payne, 1980: 128).

### 2.4.3 Gender Factors

The fight for gender equality and the freedom of women has also resulted in some significant linguistic modifications. For instance, today's students are urged to treat women and men equally and to use pronouns and nouns that are both gender neutral and inclusive. **For example**, police officer for policeman, firefighter for fireman and humankind for mankind (Oshodi, 2012: 118).

### 2.4.4 Social Statues

When a language needs to refer to ideas and objects that have just been introduced to its speakers, this is one of the most frequent reasons why it will borrow from another language. **For instance**, the English language only incorporated the Italian word **pizza** when English-speaking populations embraced the dish it refers to. Glasnost, another term that was borrowed from Russian to describe a policy of candor and transparency in Soviet political life following the Gorbachev era, was previously unknown to the English-speaking society (Nichols, 1992: 240).

Even while borrowing is very common, not all loanwords end up becoming part of the borrower language. Many are simply momentary and vanish in a comparatively short period of time. If the borrowed word refers to an object for which the borrower language lacks an equivalent word, as in the case of the aforementioned word pizza, the borrowing is more likely to be kept (Quirk, 1985: 75).

McMahon (1994) has given a few **examples** of common words borrowed from other languages.

- hammock, hurricane, maize, tobacco (Caribbean)

•gull (Cornish)

### 2.4.5 Interaction Factors

Language shift happens when people interact with those who speak a different language. Language contact is the term used to describe interactions between languages that can be brought on by a number of factors, including deliberate or unintentional social, technological, cultural, political, and foreign influences (Nichols, 1992: 248).

When kids engage with their caretakers in social settings, they automatically pick up a language. In fact, studies demonstrate that social engagement promotes lexical and phonological development during the formative years of a child's language development. A range of information needed for language development is provided through social interactions. Joint attention may give more referential information necessary for the association of a word and its referent, which may be "attracted more attention and increased motivation" in newborns during social interactions. Yet, newborns' language acquisition is influenced by social interaction (Paolillo, 2001: 65).

Interactional functions of language are employed to assist sustain or strengthen the relationship. The interaction is also made easier via interactional functions. **Examples** might include “**Thank you,**” “**Please,**” or “**I care about you.**” Imaginative functions of language help to create imaginary constructs and tell stories (ibid: 66).

## 2.4.6 Technology Factors

Users of the English language find it challenging to keep up with new vocabulary and expressions due to the rapidly evolving nature of technology. Although language changes naturally slowly, the internet has accelerated this process even further. **For example**, some entirely new words like the verb “to google”, “facebooking”, and many other words that are not yet in the Oxford English Dictionary, have come into popular use. However, not all these new words and slangs being used right now will survive forever. Over a decade ago, the term '**floppy disk**' was considered a brand new lexical development, but now it is rarely used or featured in today's conversations as it has been replaced with '**memory stick**' (Quirk, 1985: 224).

Computer slang develops even more quickly than one can think as a result of people online frequently demonstrating their linguistic mastery (ibid: 225).

### Chapter Three: Methodology

#### Types of Language Change in Arabic Language

In this section, the types of language change which are; phonological, lexical, semantic and syntactic change will be analyzed in some words of Arabic language speech.

### 3.1 Phonological Change

In modern standard Arabic, /g/ is used as a marginal phoneme to pronounce some dialectal and loan words. On the other hand, it is considered a native phoneme or allophone in most modern Arabic dialects, mostly as a variant of ق

/q/ or as a variant of /dʒ/ ج . It is also considered a separate foreign phoneme that appears only in loanwords, as in most Arabic dialects where ق is /ʔ/ and ج is /dʒ~z/.

The phoneme represented by the Arabic letter **ǧīm (ج)** has many standard pronunciations, [dʒ] in most of the Arabic language, the pronunciation of of ǧīm in most of Arabic is also a characteristic of colloquial Arabic dialect. In Arabic, it is pronounced as [g] in some words, especially colloquially. In most north of Arabic land is pronounced [ʒ], and in certain regions of areas of Iraq is pronounced as [j].

The foreign phonemes /p/ and /v/ are not necessarily pronounced by all Arabic speakers, but are often pronounced in names and loanwords. /p/ and /v/ are usually transcribed with their own letters پ /p/ and ف /v/ but as these letters

are not present on standard keyboards, they are simply written with ب /b/ and ف /f/, e.g. both نوفمبر /nu( )fambar/, /novambar, -ber/ or /nofember/ "November", both كاپريس and كابريس /ka( )pri( )s, ka( )bri( )s/ "caprice" can be used.

### 3.2 Lexical Variation

Lexical variation in modern standard Arabic is not a new phenomenon in the Arabic language; on the contrary, it has existed for centuries. The morphological system of modern standard Arabic holds inherent characteristics which enable the formation of different lexical items derived from the same root. It also allows for the existence of different words carrying exactly the same meaning. The diglossic nature of the Arabic language influences the choice of words in modern standard Arabic. Personal preferences have always been and will continue to be a factor in the process of word choice.

For instance, changing "**khatt 'ahmar**" (a red line) into **khuṭut hamrā'** (red lines) does not represent lexical variation, since the meaning of the PU is not tied to singularity. Different **inflectional** forms of verbs, nouns, and adjectives cannot be regarded as cases of Arab variation as assumed. Shifts related to grammatical categories, such as number, gender, person, tense, and definiteness are not regarded as cases of lexical variation unless the category in question is an integral part of the meaning of the Arabic language.

Conversely, **derivational** changes, with the exception of nominalization, are regarded as cases of lexical variation, since they result in the creation of new words. For instance, 'akhadha khutwah and ittakhadha khutwah (both meaning 'to take a step') are variants of the same Arabic language, since "**akhadha**" and "**ittakhadha**" are two different lexemes having the same root.

Though a kind of derivation, nominalization is not regarded here as a type of lexical variation, since it is possible to derive a verbal noun (**maṣḍar**) from any verbal words in Arabic through morphological rules without creating a different semantic concept. Semantic Change

It refers to the way in which the sense of a word changes and differs from its original meaning. For instance, that shift which is based on similarity between two aspects, such as ' is basically used with water to express its purity, thus, it is a nice voice used with 'voice', in the expression above, to express its beauty.

Shift can be based on metaphor and the hidden comparison, such as "**wall**" الجدار meant the "**orchard**" and now it means, الحائط.

### 3.3 Syntactic Change

Syntactic change has two types of change either **reanalysis** or **word order**

#### 3.3.1 Reanalysis

Trask (1996:134) refers to Arabic saying, that in an example like the following:

"he" is a pronoun, which is still a pronoun, but this pronoun has been reanalyzed depending on its meaning into some other function that was formally impossible, but recently has been normal as in:

**e.g. I am the student that Muhammad told you about.**

انا هو الطالب الذي حدثك عنه محمد

## Chapter Four

### Conclusion

To sum up, this research concludes that language change is what enables people to articulate things, ideas and attitudes in an intelligible form and to transmit the results to other people. Through this research, most linguists have recognized the importance of language change in identities because language change enables people to express who they think they are and how they are connected with other people.

In this research, the study focused on the various phonological, lexical, semantic and syntactic processes that Arabic words go through during their absorption into the lexicon in Iraq as a result of borrowing from the English language. The research illustrated that indeed Arabic words go through phonological, lexical, semantic and syntactic processes such as in vowels and consonants. These processes are referred to as adaptation. The study has concluded that indeed the types of language in Arabic language has led to an expanded vocabulary of Iraqi people. The process is usually accompanied by the substitution, deletion and shortening of some segments of the loanwords. In addition, borrowing has led to a semantic shift in the meanings of lexical items borrowed into Arabic from English languages. Finally, linguistically, both classical Arabic and modern standard Arabic are much more similar than colloquial Arabic which involves various varieties that vary from one another and from region to region in different linguistic aspects.

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